

Connections

A Publication for Employees of the Missouri Department of Transportation

January 15, 2015

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Tough Choices Ahead - What it Means for You

by Holly Dentner

Now that Missouri's 325 System has been unveiled, it's time for MoDOT employees to engage in the same conversation we've asked of Missourians. The newly proposed system of primary and supplementary routes means a great change in the way we operate.

Ultimately, we must figure out how we will function at a budget that's too small to take care of the system we have. Prioritizing our work and focusing only on about 8,000 miles of our 34,000 mile system is the way we propose to keep the roads that connect Missouri in good shape. Here are a few questions and answers you might be wondering about.



How did we get here?

Fuel tax revenues have become a diminishing revenue stream as cars become more fuel efficient. Inflation has decreased our purchasing power by more than 50 percent. What was 17 cents (state fuel tax per gallon) of purchasing power in 1992 is now about eight cents and decreasing each year. The cost of asphalt, concrete and steel cost as much as 200 percent more than they did in 1992.

Isn't the reason MoDOT's in this position is because we borrowed too much money?

After passing in 2004, Amendment 3 required the Commission to sell bonds in an effort to vastly improve the condition of our roads and bridges. Bonding allowed the department to accelerate construction projects and get a lot of work done quickly. It allowed us to bring our roads and bridges up to the condition they're in now. It allowed us to make improvements that increased safety and saved lives. It allowed us to complete work on many of the state's four-lane highway corridors, improving connectivity for commerce. Bonding brought us the system we have today, and it was the right solution for us at that time.

By doing all that work so fast, the department stayed ahead of inflation and saved Missouri taxpayers money in the long run. Now it's time to pay back the debt. For a more detailed look at Amendment 3 and bonding, you can read the full report at this web address: www.modot.org/toughchoicesahead/bonding-faq.htm.

Will we make more staff reductions?

In 2011, the Bolder Five Year Direction reduced staff, facilities and equipment. We've also cut costs through innovation and technology. We made those cuts so we would be ready to work at the reduced funding level. We are staffed at level to provide a good level of emergency operations and winter operations. Our current staffing level is the right size to provide the services to customers that they expect. There is no intention to make additional staffing reductions.

We talk about honoring our commitments. Does focusing on primary roads and bridges honor those gas tax increase commitments that have been made over the years?

Yes, we are still honoring our commitments. The legacy we live with is maintaining a highway system that's grown. Missouri's highway system is the seventh largest in the nation, yet we rank 46th in funding per mile. And with a construction budget that's too small to take care of the entire system, it's a zero sum game. If you transfer a route from the supplementary roadway system, that means another primary route has to drop off.

Will we change our level of service for maintenance operations?

We will continue to do the best we can with what we have for as long as we can. In 2017, maintenance operations on primary routes will continue as they are today. Over time, we will adjust some maintenance operations on supplementary routes. Staff from districts and divisions, including maintenance engineers and maintenance superintendents from across the state, will work over the next few months to determine exactly how we will maintain the system.

When customers and legislators begin to complain about poor road conditions, will senior management support the fact that we won't fix those roads?

Yes, but all of MoDOT has to support the tough choices that come with drastically reduced funding. Every effort has to be made to take care of our roads as best we can for as long as we can with the funding we have available. Excellent customer service is still expected, which means being responsive to customers and promptly returning calls. It will be critical for

everyone to explain why we cannot make the repairs customers want due to insufficient funding.

For more information:

The story below details some of the issues MoDOT Director Dave Nichols discussed with the Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission. You can also learn more on the MoDOT website, at www.modot.org/toughchoicesahead, including:

Watch a video of the Jan. 14 commission meeting:
<http://www.ustream.tv/channel/19741993>

Read an executive summary on the new system:
<http://www.modot.org/toughchoicesahead/documents/ToughChoicesAheadExecutiveSummary.pdf>

View a map that show which routes will be designated as “primary”:
<http://www.modot.org/toughchoicesahead/documents/STATEWIDEPRIMARYROUTES.pdf>

Commission Hears Proposed Road and Bridge Plan

by Bob Brendel

The Missouri Department of Transportation yesterday outlined for the Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission its plan for taking care of roads and bridges with a severely reduced construction budget.

MoDOT Director Dave Nichols described “Missouri’s 325 System” that focuses MoDOT’s limited resources on approximately 8,000 miles of Missouri’s 34,000-mile state highway system. The 8,000 miles make up the state’s primary roads and are the highways that connect cities across the state.

The department will use its annual construction budget – which is expected to drop to \$325 million in 2017 – to keep these primary roads in the good condition they are in today with maintenance and rehabilitation work such as overlays and bridge replacements. Enhancements, though, such as interchange improvements or road widening, will not be possible.

The remaining miles of roads and bridges will make up the state’s supplementary system and will receive only limited routine maintenance. That means MoDOT crews will do the best they can to maintain roads and bridges on the supplemental system with internal resources. Work will include filling potholes, patching pavement, flushing and sealing bridge decks, striping and repairing traffic signals. With only limited routine maintenance, however, these roads will deteriorate.

“We need at least \$485 million to maintain roads and bridges

in the condition they are today, so facing a \$325 million budget means making some tough choices,” Nichols said. “In addition, Missouri won’t be able to match federal funds in 2017, which provides a \$4 to \$1 investment. That revenue will be lost to other states.

“We won’t be able to provide the same level of service as we have in the past. This is not a course of action we want to take, but it’s one that insufficient funding forces us to take.”

The emphasis on the primary and supplementary roads differs from MoDOT’s current focus on major and minor roads because the major roads, which make up 20 percent of the system and carry 80 percent of traffic, are confined to limited areas of the state. By contrast, Missouri’s 325 System ensures that every county has at least one highway that would be included as a primary route.

However, the supplementary roads include some significant urban routes that MoDOT won’t be able to maintain in good condition at a \$325 million spending level. These urban roads don’t connect the state’s system of roads and bridges, but rather fill a more local transportation need. Still, they carry high traffic volumes – anywhere from 30,000 to 50,000 vehicles per day.



Director Dave Nichols showed commissioners a core sample of I-70 in Saline County that was taken in 2011. He said it shows the surface might seem fine, but what’s underneath has deteriorated through many years of mounting traffic.

Examples include Lindbergh Boulevard in St. Louis; Blue Parkway in Kansas City; Glenstone Avenue in Springfield; Stadium Boulevard in Columbia; Route 179 in Jefferson City; Rangeline Road in Joplin; Belt Highway in St. Joseph; and William Street in Cape Girardeau.

Watch the entire commission meeting here - [Commission Meeting Video Stream](#).

Photos of the meeting can be found here - [Commission Photos](#).

Nichols said MoDOT has done all it can to put as much money as possible toward roads and bridges. “We’ve reduced staff, facilities and equipment and directed the savings to roads and bridges,” he said. “Without additional funding, though, we’re now faced with having to reduce services as well.”

Commission Chairman Stephen Miller noted “this is not a problem that we can borrow our way out of, nor is it a problem that we can cut our way out of.”

OTHER ITEMS

Legislative Committee Report – Vice Chairman Joe Carmichael said with the Missouri General Assembly back in session there are two highway safety-related bills the Commission will support: a primary seat belt law and a ban on texting while driving.

Enterprise Risk Management – Chief Financial Officer Roberta Broeker presented the department’s annual report that details which risk items could pose a hazard to MoDOT’s ability to deliver its mission. In order, financial, workforce, transportation system failure, public opinion/support and political were the issues of most concern, and each is largely because of inadequate funding levels for a transportation system the size of MoDOT’s. The report was suggested several years ago by Commissioner Kenneth Suelthaus. He said, “Good governance requires that we have this program to most effectively manage the organization.”

Financial Forecast – Broeker also updated the Commission on MoDOT’s financial forecast saying it was relatively unchanged from a year ago and still predicts the department’s budget for contractor awards will fall to \$325 million in 2017. At that time, MoDOT will also be unable to match federal funds. The Commission voted to reallocate \$24.5 million in unused cost-share funds that are available in Fiscal Year 2016 to MoDOT’s districts utilizing the MHTC’s funding distribution formula. Districts will be able to work with their local communities to identify priority preservation projects.



During the Commission Meeting, Director Nichols congratulated the 2015 Missouri State Employees Charitable Campaign Central Office Team for leading the campaign, which raised \$162,313.78. This was the eighth year in a row that MoDOT was the leading state agency in funds raised. Central Office team members center from left: Jennifer Jorgensen, Dawn Haslag, Chairman Steve Miller, Team Chair Kelley Mertens and Richard Schomaker.



The Commission presented Paula Lambrecht with a proclamation of thanks for her many years of service to MoDOT and the Commission. Paula spent 27 years at MoDOT as an attorney public servant for the State of Missouri, the last 14 of those years as Assistant Chief Counsel-Human Resources. Paula retired last November.

Team Talk

by Roberta Broeker

Happy New Year Team MoDOT! I hope all of you had a wonderful holiday season and are ready to start the new year. The end of a year can be a bit of a mixed bag. Some of us are sad to see 2014 go after a wonderful year of cherished moments, while others are ready to say good riddance to a tough year of struggles. Wherever you may fall on that spectrum, here's to a happy and healthy 2015!

There are many traditions associated with bringing in the New Year, but none quite as universal as the New Year's resolution. In 2015 I would like to challenge you to add a New Year's resolution to your list. A resolution to be positive!

It is easy today to feel the gloom and doom of the world around us when all you see on the news is bad news, sad news and terrible news. While those stories tend to get the best ratings, the ratio of negative to positive information can leave us viewing the world through a negative lens.

"It's the lens through which your brain views the world that shapes your reality," said Shawn Achor, CEO of Good Think Inc. "And if you can change the lens, you can change your happiness."



Having a positive outlook is your choice. Every morning you wake up and make a decision about how you'll face the day. Things turn out best for the people who make the best of the way things turn out. And positive people are popular people. Let's face it...we've all turned around in the Wal-Mart aisle when we spotted the negative Eddie we don't want to deal with. Many of us have coworkers whose desks we avoid because we know they are all about the downside of every situation. Like the Dementors in the Harry Potter series, they suck the life right out of you.

My challenge to you is to make that choice to be positive. Many resolutions fizzle out as early as February, but if you can commit to taking five minutes a day for 21 days to accomplishing the following, you will be well on your way to a more positive, optimistic, grateful and happy outlook.

1. Write down three new things you are thankful for every day for 21 days. By stopping and thinking about new things you are thankful for each day you will reinforce the positive things in your world instead of the negative.
2. Write down one positive experience you had during the day. Writing it down helps you to relive that positive moment, training your mind to focus on that positive feeling.
3. Take time to write one positive email praising or thanking somebody in your support network.

It only takes 21 days to form a habit. Take those 21 days to form the habit of a positive outlook.

I would like to thank everyone on Team MoDOT for all the tremendous work that you did in 2014 and wish each and every one of you a happy New Year.



Human Resources Employee Development Division Teams with Outside Organizations

by Brandon Anderson

Human Resources Employee Development Division (HRED) recently teamed with FASTENAL Industrial Supplies to provide statewide Fall Protection training to employees. Trainers from Capital Safety, a leading manufacturer of fall protection, provided employees a hands-on training, highlighted with a drop simulator.

The training has been held in the Northwest, Central and St. Louis districts with great feedback from both safety and maintenance employees.

If you are interested in scheduling this training for your district, contact Brandon.Anderson@modot.mo.gov or (636) 887-5207. The training is provided at no cost to MoDOT.

HRED also teamed with the Southeast District's Human Resources Division to conduct a community outreach CDL Seminar. Approximately 35 individuals from around the district attended the overview on the requirements to obtain a Class B CDL Permit. Attendees expressed their appreciation to MoDOT for teaming with community organization to provide the seminar, that otherwise may have not been available to them.

One participant was so encouraged she made a life changing decision to enroll the following week in GED classes and also begin studying to obtain her CDL license. Her hope is to become eligible for employment with MoDOT.

Special thanks to Donna Ferkel, southeast district human resources manager. Special thanks also goes to the community partners who promoted the event - Sherry Maxwell, program educator with the Lincoln University Youth Development Program, Rachelle Johnson, administrator for the Mississippi County Health Department, RayAnn McQueen, administrative assistant with the New Madrid County Family Resource Center and LaCrissa Bird and William Bird Jr. with the Greater Dimension Ministries in Cape Girardeau.



Trainers from Capital Safety use a drop simulator during training.

New Back 2 Basics Video

Snow Plow Installation and Removal



Click on the image above to watch the new safety video.

January's Back 2 Basic's safety video takes viewers through the steps of safely installing and removing snow plows. The video covers everything from conducting thorough pre-trip inspections to properly and safely installing plows and wing plows. It covers how to check the controls, lift chains and condition of the plow blades and other equipment. It also highlights the use of snow plow stands, which was a 2014 innovations challenge winner in the tool and equipment category.

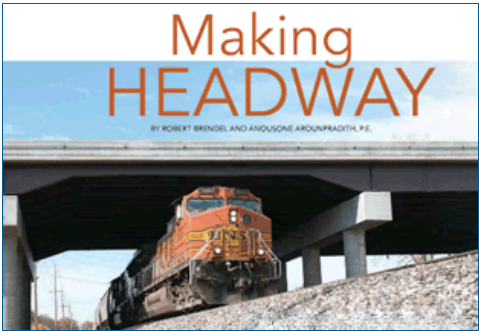
Be sure to check out this latest video in the safety series. You can view here – <http://youtu.be/Yn-ZEjcD6j0>. The video can also be found on the comprehensive safety site's video's page - [Safety Videos](#).

Supervisors are asked to use this new tool during morning safety discussions before heading out for winter operations.

Fatality Update



What's Happening



Modern Steel Magazine.

Making Headway

This month's edition of Modern Steel Magazine highlights an innovative bridge design on I-55 in Festus, Mo. During MoDOT's Safe and Sound Bridge program that improved 802 bridges in the state, two bridges on I-55 called for some unconventional thinking in designing the structures. The design allowed enough head room for trains on the BNSF railroad to pass underneath the bridges, and was still built in an economical way.

The article was written by Special Assignments Coordinator Bob Brendel and Structural Project Manager Anousone Arounpradith, with photos by Sr. Multimedia Services Specialist Cathy Morrison.

You can read the article on page 32 of the online magazine here –

January Deferred Comp News

If you're thinking about making New Year's resolutions, you might want to consider saving with the deferred



compensation plan. Check out January’s video that provides information on the benefits of using the plan, including how to stay connected through social media - [Deferred Comp News](#).

January Service Anniversaries

30 Years

Gregory J. Anderson - NW
Randall Eugene Hartman - KC
David Eugene Wood - CD
Dana Ray Edmondson - SL
Thomas Montes De-Oca - SL
Steven Herbert Lockett - SL
Linda Wolf Bokel - SW
Steven Edward Bryant - SW
Johnny A. Hughes - SE
Kurt E. Gribble - CO
William A. Stone - CO

25 Years

Warren E. McConkey - NW
Jennifer L. Hinson - NE
Donald R. Asher - NE
Henry Chukwuemeka Uti - KC
Michael W. Dusenberg - CD
Gregory Owens - SL
Patrick M. Whitaker - SW
Robert D. Merriman - SE
Brett Steven Trautman - CO
Randy Clinton Hitt - CO
Ronald Eugene Effland - CO
Margaret Ellen Meier - CO

20 Years

Brent R. Jones - NW
Diane Marie Sipes - NW
Darrin G. Lund - NW
James William Schaefer - NE
Rick D. Brokes - NE
Susan E. Barry - KC

20 Years Continued

Robert J. Jany - CD
Travis Duane Koestner - CD
Alvin Forbes Rhorer - CD
Michael J. Schupp - CD
Christine Marie Redhage - SL
Charlotte Marie Stewart - SL
Deanna Lynn Venker - SL
Debra L. Vinson - SW
James A. Jewsbury - SW
Matthew B. Malone - SE
Larry D. Rothermich - SE
Eric F. Krapf - SE
Andrew L. Meyer - SE
Stephanie Jo Teasley - CO
Anousone Arounpradith - CO
Boyd Louis Denson - CO
David James McEuen - CO

15 Years

Tammy Sue Childress - NW
William D. Noyes - NE
Rodney Gene Miller - NE
Phillip J. Williams - CD
Lisa L. Kuntz - SL
Andrew J. Tuerck - SL
Kirk W. Sherman - SW
James Wesley Snyder - SW
Khoa Van Nguyen - SW
Tommy R. Brown - SE
Kevin R. Plott - SE
Paul Gerard Roth - SE
Joseph L. Alderson - CO
William James Dunn - CO

15 Years Continued

Aaron C. Kemna - CO
Darren J. Kemna - CO
Michael David Larimore - CO
Susan Lea Capehart - CO

10 Years

Michael Todd Burns - NW
David K. Hamlin - NE
Toshia M. Drebes - NE
Jonathan L. Bruner - NE
Michael D. Burson - KC
Chad L. Hessenflow - KC
William Wayne Van Dyne - KC
Charles Christopher Zurn - KC
Wayne D. Jolley - KC
Larry J. Sutton - CD
James Aron Raney - SW
Ron Lee Green - SW
Corey A. Menz - SE
Terry K. Murray - SE
Kevin C. Clark - SE
Marvin G. Adams - SE
Leslie Kim Norsworthy - SE
Marie D. Oldham - SE
Daniel J. Oesch - CO
Joseph A. Carter - CO

5 Years

David Lee Hardy - SL
Jerry D. Haney - SE
Dennis P. Peterson - CO
Davin G. Greeno - CO
Andrew Ray Williford - CO

Connections

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573.751.2840 / www.modot.org

Editor: Tammy Wallace

Comments & Suggestions

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Central Office

An Interview with Senior Fabrication Technician Shelly Lewis

by Patrick Wood

What is a “day in the life” of a senior fabrication technician?

My job duties require me to travel to steel fabrication shops all over the United States where I conduct quality assurance inspections in areas of material preparation, welding, assembly and coating application for compliance to MODOT specifications. I also make sure all aspects of the bridge welding code book are upheld. Welding is by far the most specialized element of my job. It is important to have an inspector who is certified at inspecting a fracture critical bridge like a cable stay bridge if you don’t want any of the welding to fail and have the whole bridge come down.

How long have you been doing this job?

I have been with MoDOT for 20 years in the Bridge Division fabrication section. I have been doing this job for the last 14 years.

What drew you to this job as a career?

As a kid I wanted to be an architect. My father was a building contractor, which inspired me to go that direction with my career. After going to Linn Tech, I was hired by a bridge shop called DeLong’s Inc to detail bridges. I soon discovered that I loved bridges more than buildings. I was later hired to check bridge shop drawings for MoDOT. I was in the same section as the inspectors so it wasn’t long before inspecting was the next step for me.

Dennis Heckman stated you are one of the only women in the country that does this job. Why do you think that women are in the minority of this career?

Right now this job is a bit of a man’s world but that doesn’t mean women aren’t welcome or just as capable. There are aspects of this position that may deter both men and women from pursuing this career. It can be extremely hot or cold depending on where you are. You could be going to a shop in Arkansas during 117 degree heat or to Wisconsin with 50 below temperatures. There are dangerous work environments, and this position requires a very mechanical mind. One of the requirements requires the applicants to have passed an eight hour test to be certified. I have met other women that have their certification but they don’t do this exact job.

What is your favorite thing about your job?

I really enjoy the travel and meeting new people.

What has been the highlight of your career so far as a senior fabrication technician?

Working on the Stan Musial Veterans Memorial Bridge has been the highlight of my career so far. I worked more with MoDOT field people on this project than on other jobs and I really enjoyed getting to work with them. I’m proud to be a part of the MoDOT Team.

What is something strange that you have seen on the job?

When I was in Florida, the shop I was at was next to a plant that built cruise ships. These ships are built in the water and some of the welders are divers. It is common for an alligator in that area to swim up to them. If they are under four feet in length they just move them, but if they are longer than four feet they call in a trapper to come get them. They called



Lewis says working on the Stan Musial Bridge has been the highlight of her career.

in a trapper one day when I was there and I got to have my picture taken with a 13 foot alligator. It was moving around and I almost got knocked down by its tail.

It was pretty common around that shop to be walking within six feet of small alligators. After a while it isn't shocking anymore. It's kind of like seeing the neighborhood dog after a while!

January is Blood Donor Month



Donating blood is a quick and easy way to save a person's life. Unfortunately, less than 10 percent of the eligible U.S. population decides to donate each year.

January is national blood donor month. Take steps this month and consider donating a pint of

blood to help someone in need.

Read all you'll need to know about donating in this month's Coventry Wellness Flier – [Save a Life](#).

New From Coventry



Coventry Healthcare is offering fitness discounts that can help you take control of your health so you can look and feel better. You can even try out a gym for free.

And with fitness discounts you can save, too - just for taking good care of yourself.

You can:

- Save on gym memberships
- Save on treadmills, ellipticals and more
- Try an at-home weight-loss program
- Get health coaching to stop smoking, lower stress and more

Check out all the information in this flier – [GlobalFit](#).

Central Office Happenings

First Annual MoDOT Co-Ed Indoor Volleyball Tournament

Saturday, March 28, 2015 - 8 a.m.

Father Tolton Regional Catholic High School

3351 E. Gans Road, Columbia, MO 65201

- Co-Ed rules apply, at least two girls must be on the court at all times
- Open to all MoDOT employees and their significant others (minimum of six people per team).
- Ten team maximum
- \$100 per team (for referees and facility)
- Complete the roster and forward to Amanda Henley - amanda.henley@modot.mo.gov by Feb. 27
- Information can also be found on the Mee Zone page - [CO-Ed Volleyball](#)



Missouri State Employee Blood Drives

Jan. 16 – 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

St. Joseph Cathedral – Mary's Room

Jan. 20 – 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Truman Building - 4th Floor Auditorium

Jan. 23 – 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Secretary of State – Interpretive Center



Papa John's pizza will be provided starting at 11 a.m. for all presenting donors.

2015 State Employee Departmental Challenge

Each time you give blood at the Truman Building or St. Joseph Cathedral, you have the opportunity to credit your department for your blood donation. A tally will be kept throughout the blood drives.

You can sign up for the challenge by visiting www.redcrossblood.org and enter sponsor code: MOState. For additional questions, contact Amanda Schlottach - amanda.schlottach@redcross.org.



First Aid /CPR /AED Classes

Jan. 20 - 8 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.
601 West Main Street in Training Room B.

Space is limited, so check with your supervisor, then sign up through the [LMS Student Center](#).

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Northwest District

Skating for Safety

The Northwest Coalition for Roadway Safety is a proud sponsor of the Safety Patrol in St. Joseph. The Safety Patrol is organized by Officer Todd Smith of the St. Joseph Police Department. Through the program, students learn and practice basic traffic safety rules, becoming leaders in their schools and communities by helping fellow students get to and from school safely, whether in a car, walking or riding a bus or bicycle.

Every December, Officer Smith invites all Safety Patrol members to the local roller skating rink for a celebration to recognize their hard work and leadership skills. Attendees can skate for free, refreshments are provided and door prizes given away. They also receive a t-shirt with the Buckle Up and Arrive Alive messages to wear as they continue to teach at their school and in their communities throughout the year.



Safety Patrol members pose in their Arrive Alive t-shirts at their mid-year celebration.



Safety Patrol students from across St. Joseph took a moment to celebrate the traffic safety and community leadership skills they're developing while serving on the Safety Patrol.



Attendees also received door prizes, such as the gift cards these Safety Patrol members are holding.

Tough Choices

Supervisors and leadership from the Northwest District gathered in the Northwest Conference Center to watch Director Nichols' present "Tough Choices Ahead: Missouri's 325 System" to the Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission at their January 14, 2015, meeting. To learn more about the plan, talk to your supervisor or another member

of the Northwest District's leadership team, visit the Touch Choices section of Customer Relations' SharePoint page or click the link on MoDOT's website, www.modot.org.



For more info

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Northeast District

Know Safety, No Injury

Road and bridge projects contain many dangers for our employees and the traveling public if precautions are not taken to keep everyone safe. With safety being the number one priority in MoDOT, we want to do everything we can to prevent accidents from happening.

With spring approaching in the next few months, painting projects will begin, so we want to remind everyone of the safety steps that need to be taken when spot painting structural steel. We always want to address five areas:



I'm Safe, What I Use is Safe, Where I am is Safe, My Customers are Safe and So We Go Home Safe.

I Am Safe – Always discuss the operation with all employees that are involved. Using Risk Based Assessments (RBAs) to communicate the issues will help to address all issues. Ensure everyone is wearing the proper PPE and knows the fall protection procedures if working more than 6 feet above the ground.

What I Use is Safe –When walking under and around bridges and culverts, large rocks can be a hazard. Be sure to discuss footing to help eliminate slips and falls. Discussion needs to occur in transporting and operating equipment, as well, as using materials. We

want to ensure we safely move and use the scaffolds, sandblaster, paint sprayer, air compressor and other equipment, and know the risks of blasting the sand and paint products.

Where I Am is Safe – Traffic control is always key on a project to keep not only our employees safe, but the traveling public as well. We need to set up the work zone according to our standards. Quality traffic control products such as signs, channelizers and Stop/Slow paddles are important for a quality work zone. We want to familiarize ourselves with our surroundings and identify any site conditions that may exist. Have a plan in place to handle exposed utilities, an escape area for your flagger when on bridges and the placement of equipment within the work area. Always have a spotter present when moving equipment around power lines and remember to discuss why equipment should always be a minimum of 10 feet from overhead power lines.

My Customers are Safe - Informing the public of the work zone through news releases and our Traveler Information Map will help raise awareness of the work being performed. Planning the work to be done at times when traffic volumes are lower and our exposure is reduced will help increase safety for us and our customers.

So We Go Home Safe – Planning and communication are key elements to a successful job. Our goal is for everyone to go home safe every day.

“Safety talks and preparations are necessary to get everyone prepared for the hazards of the job,” said Paula Gough, Northeast district engineer. “Not only in this operation, but all operations, we want all of our employees to return home safe each night,” she added.

You ARE Somebody's Type

One hour is all it takes. Takes what, you ask.

One hour is all it takes to save a life. How can we help save a life? Donate blood. The two most common reasons cited by individuals for not giving blood are: “Never thought about it” or “I don’t like needles”. But one donation can save the lives of up to three people. Within the MoDOT family, there are numerous individuals who give an hour of their time to donate blood. David Liebhart, senior construction inspector at the Macon Project Office, is one of those people.

David has been donating since he was a teenager. When asked why he does it, David simply responded, “I give because I can.”



Every two seconds someone in the U.S. is in need of blood. “There are so many individuals that need blood, that if by me taking one hour out of my day to give can help someone, then that is what I am going to do,” he added. “And it doesn’t hurt a bit,” he said with a smile.

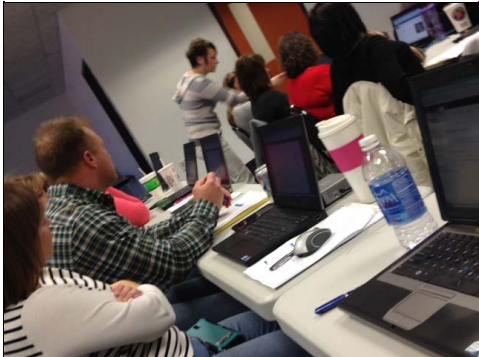
Macon Regional Office recently held a blood drive and collected 20 units that will help individuals around the area. David is pictured above giving at the drive.

So we want to say thank you to David, and all of the other MoDOT employees that take time to give blood in their communities. Blood can only come from generous donors like you. Remember, you are somebody’s type!

Around the District...



Crews have been working around the intermittent winter weather to fix some edge ruts, like the Warrenton crews shown here on the I-70 north outer road west of Warrenton. Operating the tractor is Mike Flake and Ray Barnes is in the truck.



The Northeast District held a SharePoint training for employees that will be administrators of the program. Several attended the training that was held in the district office.

Retired or Retiring? Sign Up for Northeast District News and Connections

Are you retired or soon to be? If you would like to continue to receive Northeast News through your email, please provide the retirement representative with your email address when signing your retirement papers. Also, if you are interested in receiving email about road work in your county, getting text messages about road closures or even receiving Connections, go to <https://www6.modot.mo.gov/eMoDOTWeb/jsp/signon/signon.jsp> to sign up!

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Comments & Suggestions

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MoDOT Employee and Family Receive Keys to Home

Four years ago, James Ponder and Pamela St. John were both unemployed, homeless and living in a shelter with their children. Today, amidst a bitterly cold winter, they are employed full time, enjoying the warmth and security of their new home and feeling so grateful that they worked diligently to get through what seemed like insurmountable adversity.

On Dec. 16, the couple, their two sons, 15-years old Jaaron and 9-year-old Josiah, and their 4-year-old granddaughter Ra-nyah walked through the door of their new home in Kansas City’s Ivanhoe Neighborhood, thanks to a Jackson County government program and the couple’s strong determination

James, now a full-time maintenance worker with MoDOT’s Kansas City District, said the journey home was one step at a time. He credits reStart, a Kansas City interfaith ministry that works with homeless persons transition to a more stable and productive life, for helping him and his family. At first, reStart provided temporary shelter for Ponder’s family, eventually getting them a rent-assisted apartment and teaching him and St. John valuable life skills.



ReStart guided Ponder toward MoDOT through part-time employment for two summers, then encouraged him to apply for a seasonal position in late 2012 through MoDOT’s Boots On The Ground recruitment program. He came on board MoDOT as a part-time worker in late October 2012, and was hired full time by April 2013. By then, St. John also had gotten a full-time job at Truman Medical Center. Life was improving.

And then their life got even better.

“A case worker from reStart put us in the drawing” for the Constructing Futures program, Ponder said.

Jackson County acquires abandoned or forfeited properties, works with groups like Habitat for Humanity to rehabilitate the houses, and then donates them to needy families. The recipients must pay property taxes and keep it insured for seven years, then it becomes theirs free and clear.

Ponder’s new home came with new appliances, play equipment in the yard and other donated materials. A Christmas tree was waiting in the living room when Jackson County Executive Mike Sanders handed Ponder and St. John the house keys.

“I don’t cry, but I cried. It was overwhelming,” he said when he learned they would get their new home. “It’s great to be in our own place, pay our own bills, stay afloat,” Ponder said.

He looks back on where he was, and where he has come, thankful for so much.

“Without reStart, I never would have known about MoDOT’s temporary hiring,” he said. “ReStart classes helped me learn how to be a productive citizen.”

MoDOT is more than a job to him. He sees the opportunity for a career. “I’m learning so many new things,” Ponder said. “That’s my favorite part of the job. My advice is, never give up. Keep on trying. Life’s getting better.”

Read more about Ponder’s [new home](#) and the [contest on Kansas City Star](#)

Crews Set to Blast Part of Fairfax Bridge

Crews will detonate part of the Fairfax Bridge to help make way for a brand new \$79 million replacement bridge. The American Bridge Company plans to blast the end spans of the bridge at 9 a.m. Friday, Jan. 16.

Crews will close northbound and southbound U.S. 69 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday, Jan. 16 to accommodate the blast. MoDOT has designated a public viewing area at E.H. Young Riverfront Park, 1001 Argosy Parkway in Riverside, Mo.

The current U.S. 69 Highway Bridge over the Missouri River is a dual bridge structure consisting of the Platte Purchase Bridge and the Fairfax Bridge. Those bridges connect Platte County, Mo. and Wyandotte County, Ks.

The southbound Route 69 Bridge, commonly referred to as the Fairfax Bridge, was built in 1933. The northbound Route 69 Bridge, commonly referred to as the Platte Purchase Bridge, was built in 1957.



Both were built to accommodate the type, size, and weight of vehicles at the time of construction, and were not designed for the high volume and heavy weight limits of truck traffic that you typically find today within the heavy industrial zone where these bridges are located. Narrow lanes and load limitations restrict the use of each bridge by overweight and oversized vehicles. Because of their age, both structures require frequent maintenance and costly extensive repairs, causing motorists further delay.

The new structure will be a singular bridge with multiple lanes and bike/pedestrian access and will be open to traffic in December 2016. This is a project shared by the Kansas Department of Transportation and MoDOT.

Learn more about [this project online](#) and follow updates on twitter at [twitter.com/MoDOT_KC](#), #us69MoRiverBridge

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Tree-trimming Operation a Huge Success

The Central District recently completed a tree-trimming operation on Route 68 in Phelps and Dent counties with use of a specialized piece of cutting equipment known as a Jarraff (pronounced like the animal “giraffe”) Tree Trimmer.

The operation took place between Routes 8 and 19 along Route 68 and featured the Salem maintenance shed with help from the Edgar Springs (personnel), Rolla (personnel), Houston (forestry-cutting equipment) and Columbia (miscellaneous equipment) maintenance sheds.

The Jarraff trimmer (pictured on the right) is designed to make tree-trimming faster, safer and more efficient with the use of an extendable mechanical saw arm. The Jaraffe also has a higher reach on the tree than a traditional bucket truck method.

“We were really pleased with the results,” said Assistant District Maintenance Engineer Jason Shafer. “It was by far a faster and more efficient method than a bucket truck and a chainsaw. We’re hoping we will be able to utilize these types of trimmers more in the future.”



A huge thank you is due to MoDOT’s Jarraff operators Justin Nash, John Evans, Kevin Blankenship, and Jarret Ready; tree-trimming crew workers Charles Smith, Josh Rollins, Elliot Fitch, Ken Thomas, and Nathan Ragsdale; as well as district workers in Salem, Rolla, Edgar Springs, Houston and Columbia; all of whom helped to make the operation a huge success.

“All of our personnel did an outstanding job of learning how to use the equipment,” said Shafer. “We were really pleased with the results of the operation. We had several comments from the public on a job well done.”

Tree-trimming is a vital part of the district’s maintenance operations arsenal, providing safety for motorists while helping snow and ice removal efforts by MoDOT to be more efficient.

“We trim trees as a safety measure for motorists,” said Shafer. “Trimming trees improves sight distances on the highway, reduces the possibility of overhanging limbs falling in the roadway. It also helps with the efficiency of snow removal by allowing more sunlight to reach the road. When more sunlight reaches the road, snow and ice melt faster and in turn, our snow removal efforts are far more effective.”

District Participates in Guard Docudrama

The Central District recently

participated in and assisted with the production of a National Guard docudrama that discourages drinking and driving by showing the steep costs of a fatal drunk-driving accident.

The docudrama was deemed a big success and was filmed on Dec. 17 near the National Guard armory in Jefferson City. The docudrama featured local safety and professional crews, as well as MoDOT Central District personnel.

The docudrama crew has been invited to perform a live recreation of the docudrama at Missouri National Guard Association (MONGA) conference in the spring of this year, as well as the National Guard Commanders Conference in the fall.



Representatives of several local agencies, including MoDOT's Central District, participate in a drunk-driving docudrama by the Missouri National Guard in Jefferson City.

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Registration Begins for Second Annual Work Zone Awareness 5K



Registration is now open for the second Annual Work Zone Awareness 5K held on March 21 in Chesterfield. This event promotes health fitness, safety and honors workers who have lost their lives in the line of duty.

The 5K walk/run is open to MoDOT employees, their families/friends and the public.

Registration ends March 18 and those who register by March 10 will be guaranteed a race t-shirt.

For additional information or to register/volunteer for this event, please visit this link - [Work Zone Awareness 5K](#).

Construction Council Recognizes St. Louis Project for Diversity

The St. Louis Council of Construction Consumers (SLCCC) honored the Mississippi River Bridge project team at their annual award ceremony last month. The team received the Diversity Inclusion Organizational Excellence Award for their leadership with the use of minority and women owned business enterprises for the project.



SL District Engineer Greg Horn (center) receives the diversity award from SLCCC Board Chair Jerry Anderson (left) and SLCCC Diversity Committee Chair Sandra Marks (right) at their annual award ceremony on December 18.

Economic Council Honors Page Team for Benefits of Phase 3

MoDOT's Route 364/Page Phase 3 team was honored this month by the St. Charles County Economic Development

Council. The team was awarded the Business Spotlight Award for the month of January for all of the hard work on project.



The Page Phase 3 Team featured with Business Spotlight Award (left to right) Eric Trupianok, Tony Gambaro, Jason Balestreri, Dave Simmons, Erick Kopinski, Jessica Wilson and Tom Evers.

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Southwest District

Southwest District at Work



CLEARING THE WAY – Republic Senior Maintenance Worker Todd Richter clears brush along Route 160 near Willard. (Photo/David Mitchell)



BRIDGE REPAIRS – Maintenance Worker Craig Hargus (left), Intermediate Maintenance Worker Scott Oliver (center) and Seasonal Maintenance Worker Kory Noe of the Regional Bridge Crew make repairs to a bridge on I-49 south of Lamar. The crew is rebuilding a bridge wall after a multi-vehicle crash on Jan. 8. (Photo/David Mitchell)

Mercy Wellness Tour Bus Offers Mammography Screenings to District Employees, Spouses

by David Mitchell

For the second straight year, the Southwest District arranged for female employees covered by MoDOT/MSHP health insurance to receive free mammography screenings through Mercy Hospital’s mobile Wellness Bus.

New this year, spouses of district employees also were eligible for the screenings.

The bus parked outside the District Office in Springfield and the Regional Office in Joplin in early January.

A total of 18 women signed up for the screenings.

Senior Paralegal Dottie Roush was among those who visited the bus. She liked the convenience.

“It’s fast, about 15 minutes versus hours going to an office or hospital,” Roush said. “I would definitely encourage others to use it!”

Four days a week, the bus travels to employers around southwest



Missouri providing the same breast cancer screening using the same digital equipment as women get at Mercy Hospital.

Mercy’s Paula O’Neal, RMT, performed the screenings during the stop in Springfield.

She said women are sometimes hesitant to get the exam. It can be inconvenient for them to take off work and get to the hospital or they’ve heard horror stories about the discomfort of the exam.

“Anticipation is worse than the actual experience,” said O’Neal. “Ninety percent of the time they say it wasn’t as bad as they expected.”

O’Neal stressed early detection is important. The American Cancer Society recommends women over age 40 get the screening once a year.

Senior Paralegal Dottie Roush (left) goes over paperwork with Mercy Hospital’s Brent Berry prior to her exam during the Mercy Wellness Bus stop at the Southwest District Office in Springfield. (Photo/David Mitchell)

SW District Recognized at MAPA Conference

by David Mitchell

The Southwest District received high honors for several asphalt paving projects completed in 2014 at the Missouri Asphalt Paving Association’s (MAPA) annual meeting in Columbia Jan. 12-14.

The paving association recognizes contractors and government agencies for projects in various categories.

“Projects are nominated by the project offices and contractors,” said District Construction and Materials Engineer Steve Campbell. “After that, the panel looks at things like appearance, test results and tries to come up with a list of winners.”

The district was recognized for these four paving projects:

- Clinton Project Office - I-49 in Bates County (Primary Route greater than 50,000) completed by Chester Bross Construction, Hannibal
- Springfield Project Office - Routes 13, 32 & 83 in Polk and St. Clair Counties (Primary Route greater than 50,000) completed by APAC Missouri, Inc., Columbia
- Springfield Project Office - Routes D (Sunshine Street) & Business 65 (Glenstone Avenue) in Greene County (Primary Route less than 50,000) completed by APAC Missouri, Inc., Columbia
- Joplin Project Office - Route 171 in Jasper County (Full Depth Paving) completed by APAC Missouri, Inc., Columbia



Clinton Resident Engineer Brett Foster (left), Joplin Resident Engineer Jason Evenden (center) and Springfield Resident Engineer Brad Gripka hold awards received by the Southwest District at the MAPA conference in Columbia.

“To receive so many awards is a credit to a few things,” Campbell said. “Our people do a good job, we have good inspectors who know what they’re doing and I think our contractors do a good job.”

“The contractors understand the value of the recognition. They want their names read in front of 400 industry people,” he said.

The Southwest District received four of the seven awards given at the meeting.

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Comments & Suggestions

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Southeast District

Recent Southeast District Blood Drive Has Special Meaning to MoDOT Employee

Some people are a bit apprehensive about donating blood. But Derrick Norris, Senior Maintenance Worker at Van Buren, beamed with pride as he waited to donate and proudly shared a photo of his beautiful family—his wife, Angie, and their 7-month old son, Cruz.

But behind Derrick’s smile and family photo, there is quite a story.

Soon after their marriage, Angie was diagnosed with thyroid cancer, which slightly delayed their plans for children. But thankfully, soon after receiving medical clearance, their desire to start a family was fulfilled.

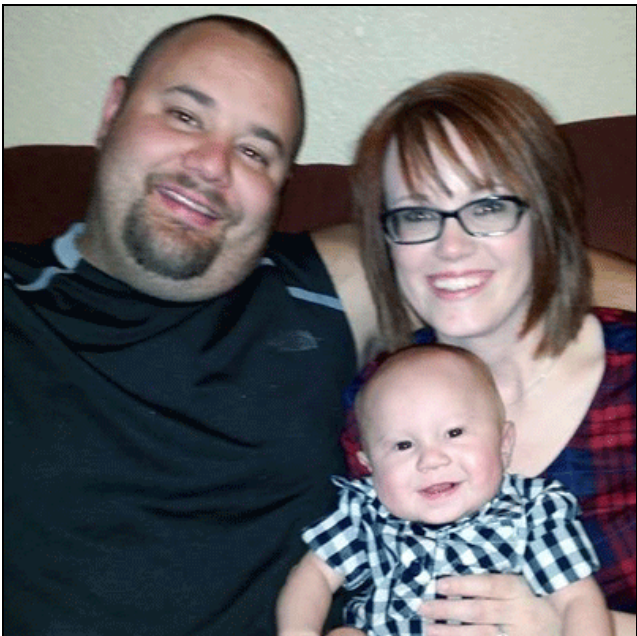
On May 24, 2014, Derrick and Angie welcomed their son, Cruz, into the world. But immediately, Cruz was rushed to several hospitals before ending up in St. Louis for surgery to repair his detached esophagus. Cruz then spent two months in Children’s Hospital and also underwent open heart surgery to repair a hole in his heart and a defective valve.

Cruz has since recovered, and no one would guess just a few months ago, this healthy, bright-eyed baby was undergoing major operations and an extended hospital stay.

“During his surgeries, he had to receive several blood transfusions,” said Derrick. “My son and the trying times my family went through helped me see the big picture and really changed my outlook on everything.”



Cruz Norris spent two months in STL Children’s Hospital and underwent open heart surgery.



He described that prior to his son’s birth and subsequent surgeries, donating blood wasn’t something that he frequently thought about. But now, it has a special meaning and purpose.

“This is my second time to donate,” he said during the Southeast District’s most recent blood drive. “I hadn’t donated until my son was born, and for me, donating has special significance. I think about my son and the care he received.”

Derrick was one of the individuals that helped the Red Cross in their blood drive at the Southeast District office on Jan. 8. The goal was to collect 24 productive units. But that was exceeded with a total of 36 units. Each unit collected has the potential to save up to three lives.

“Thanks to everyone who helped make the blood drive a success,” said Risk Management Technician Sue Sifford. “The Red Cross had so many wishing to donate that they ran out of supplies, and several individuals had to be turned away.”

Photo: Cruz is now back home and doing well, but Derrick Norris hasn’t forgotten how much his coworkers and MoDOT helped his family through this tough time. From ShareLeave to prayers and well wishes, Derrick explained that he felt

blessed to be at MoDOT during this time.

Another Chance to Donate...



If you missed the last blood drive, there is another chance to donate. The Red Cross is holding a second drive at the Southeast District's regional office in Willow Springs on Feb. 24 from 7 to 11 a.m.

Just remember to bring a copy of your ID and be ready to "Rock N' Roll" up your sleeve! For an appointment time, contact Senior Customer Service Representative Barb Conner at (417) 469-6204 or barbara.conner@modot.mo.gov.

Photo: SE District employees generously donated blood to help save lives during the recent blood drive on Jan. 8. So many employees wished to donate, the Red Cross ran out of supplies and had to turn employees away.

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